

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10, 12-18, 20, 21, 23-25 and 27-36 are currently pending; Claims 16 and 28 are amended by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

The outstanding Official Action rejected Claims 16 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; rejected Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 15-21, 23-25, 27-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over French Patent No. 2822255 to Paolucci et al. (hereinafter Paolucci) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,587,883 to Rajakarunanayake (hereinafter Raj) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,587,883 to Robinson; and rejected Claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Paolucci, Raj, and Robinson, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,959,420 to Mitchell et al. (hereinafter Mitchell).

Claims 16 and 28 are amended to be consistent with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. No new matter is added and this amendment does not raise a new issue requiring further search or consideration.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the Claims 1-10, 12, 13, 15-21, 23-25, 27, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Paolucci, Raj, and Robinson.

Robinson is not prior art with regard to the presently pending patent application. The present patent application is a National Stage application of PCT/EP04/00316, which in turn claims priority to European Patent Office (EPO) 03001030, having a filing date of January 17, 2003. Robinson was filed in the USPTO on June 4, 2003, which is after the priority date for the present application. While Robinson itself claims priority to a Provisional application No. 60/385,548, that provisional application has not been cited as prior art against the presently pending application. Furthermore, Applicants' review of the provisional application indicates that the provisional application does not seem to disclose the feature on

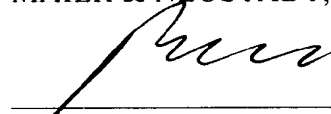
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Reply to Office Action of October 1, 2007

which the Office Action relies in Robinson. Therefore, as Robinson is not prior art with regard to the presently pending application, it is respectfully submitted that all of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) rejections of the pending claims is improper and fails to make a prima facie case of obviousness.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the forgoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-10, 12-18, 20, 21, 23-25 and 27-36 as amended is definite and patentably distinguishing over the prior art. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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